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EXAMINER

VAN DOREN, BETH

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3623

DATE MAILED: 04/28/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/480,589

Applicant(s)

RUPPELT ET AL.

Examiner

Beth Van Doren

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ML

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 09 February 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-78 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-78 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application on 02/09/04. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 01/13/04 has been entered.

2. Claims 1, 11, 19, 26, 28, 38, 46, 53, 55, 62, 64, 66, and 71 have been amended in the communications received 01/13/04. Claims 73-78 have been added. Claims 1-78 are now pending in this application.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1-78 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Storch et al. (U.S. 5,920,846) in view of *GE Answer Center* (General Electric Company). The following articles explain the different aspects of the *GE Answer Center*:

- i. Article "GEA: Making Things Happen-Consumer Friendly" from Appliance Manufacturer (referred to herein as reference A);
- ii. Article "Connected to Consumers" by Norman C Remich, Jr. (referred to herein as reference B);

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iii. Article "Benefiting from the 'Net'" by John S McClenahen (referred to herein as reference C); and

iv. Article "GE Answers Call to Evolve 10-Year-Old Help Line" by Alan Radding (referred to herein as reference D).

5. As per claim 1, Storch et al. teaches a method of enabling scheduling of a service call in a computing environment, the method comprising:

obtaining product information regarding a product from a user of the computing environment (See column 54, lines 1-15, column 55, lines 1-8, column 56, lines 10-25 and 41-51, wherein an order taker person or a customer enters product information from a user into the computing environment) ;

automatically providing to the user, from who the product information is obtained, at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information, wherein the automatic providing includes providing without interaction between the user and any other human being (See column 53, lines 62-67, column 54, lines 1-15 and 66-67, column 55, lines 1-8, 18-23, 27-38, and 45-60, column 57, lines 42-54, and column 58, lines 5-35 and 46-58, wherein the user is automatically provided via the computing system at least one appointment at which he/she can schedule an appointment for a service house call based on the known product information. The customer automatically interacts with the computer system. See specifically column 53, lines 62-67, and column 54, lines 1-5);

reviewing a user's account (See at least column 54, lines 15-30); and

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determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider (See at least column 55, lines 1-8, 18-23, 27-38, and 45-60, column 56, lines 1-25 and 60-67, and column 57, lines 15-40, wherein a determination is made as to whether the product needs to be serviced by a technician).

However, while Storch et al. discloses reviewing the account of the user to make determinations about the scheduling of a technician, Storch et al. does not expressly disclose and *GE Answer Center* discloses:

determining whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product (See reference A, page 1, section 1, and page 2, section 3, wherein a determination is made whether the product is in warranty and serviced by the manufacturer); and

determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, wherein the service provider is different than the manufacturer (See reference A, page 1, section 1, page 2, section 3, page 4, sections 3 and 4, and page 5, section 1, wherein out-of-warranty calls are referred to authorized service technicians).

Both Storch et al. and *GE Answer Center* disclose scheduling service calls for customers based on product information as well as communicating using a computer communication network. It was old and well known at the time of the invention that products and installations have associated warranties that are considered when completing a service request. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to determine whether the product information indicates whether the product needs to be serviced by a manufacturer or a service provider when scheduling the technician of Storch et al. in order to

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more efficiently schedule a qualified technician that meets the needs of the service order input by the user.

6. As per claim 2, Storch et al. discloses a method wherein the product information comprises a location of the product and at least one of a product type, a product manufacturer, and a product model number, and wherein the at least one available appointment is based on the location of the product (See column 54, lines 1-15, column 55, lines 1-8, 18-23, 27-38, and 45-60, and column 56, lines 10-20, wherein the product information includes the location of the product (where the service house call needs to happen) and at least the product type).

7. As per claim 3, Storch et al. discloses a method wherein the automatically providing comprises selecting the at least one available appointment from at least one possible appointment for at least one service provider (See at least figure 12, column 54, lines 1-15 and 66-67, column 55, lines 1-8, 18-23, 27-38, and 45-60, column 57, lines 42-54, and column 58, lines 5-35 and 46-58, wherein at least one available appointment is selected from the available appointments from at least one service provider associated with the geographic location of the product).

8. As per claim 4, Storch et al. discloses a method wherein the automatically providing comprises selecting the at least one available appointment from a plurality of appointments, and wherein the plurality of appointments are associated with a plurality of service providers at a plurality of locations (See at least figure 12, column 54, lines 66-67, column 55, lines 1-8, 18-38, and 45-60, column 57, lines 42-54, and column 58, lines 5-35 and 46-58, wherein at least one available appointment time is selected from a plurality of available appointments, these appointments being associated with a database containing a plurality of service providers

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(service technicians able to be dispatched to provide service) for a plurality of geographic locations).

9. As per claim 5, Storch et al. discloses a method wherein the automatically providing comprises determining in real-time the at least one available appointment (See at least figure 12, column 54, lines 66-67, column 55, lines 1-8, 18-38, and 45-60, column 57, lines 42-54, and column 58, lines 5-35 and 46-58, wherein real-time appointment availability records are maintained in the system and are provided in real-time to the user).

10. As per claim 6, Storch et al. discloses a method wherein the automatically providing comprises determining in real-time the at least one available appointment as unavailable in the event another user has selected the at least one available appointment (See at least figure 12, column 54, lines 66-67, column 55, lines 1-8, 18-38, and 45-60, column 57, lines 42-54, and column 58, lines 5-35 and 46-58, wherein real-time appointment availability records are maintained in the system and are provided in real-time to the user. Appointments that have already been selected by other users are stored as unavailable and cannot be selected by the user).

11. As per claim 7, Storch et al. discloses a method wherein product information is elicited from the user (See column 54, lines 1-7 and 66-67, column 55, lines 1-8, and column 56, lines 1-25, wherein product information is elicited from the user). However, Storch et al. does not expressly disclose providing suggested product information to the user for use by the user in providing the product information.

GE Answer Center discloses providing suggested product information to the user for use by the user in providing the product information (See reference A, page 2, sections 1 and 4, page

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3, section 1, and column 4, section 2, and reference D, page 1, section 1, page 2, section 1, 2, 4, and 5, and page 3, section 1, wherein the GE Answer Center is provided product information from the consumer based on prompts and questions asked by the representative).

Both Storch et al. and *GE Answer Center* disclose scheduling service calls for customers based on product information as well as eliciting information from the customers to aid in the communication and identification of the problem of the customer. It is old and well known that a service representative (or the interface acting as a service representative) has specific information that must be known in order to help a customer and that the representative (or interface) will gain this needed information from the customer by asking questions and receiving answers to these questions. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to suggest product information to the user so that the user would provide the product information in order to better meet the needs of the customer by gaining all the information needed to diagnose the customer's situation.

12. As per claim 8, Storch et al. discloses a method wherein the product information comprises at least one of a product type, a product manufacturer, and a product model number (See column 54, lines 1-15, column 55, lines 1-8, 18-23, 27-38, and 45-60, and column 56, lines 10-20, wherein the product information includes at least the product type). However, Storch et al. does not expressly disclose suggested product information.

GE Answer Center discloses suggested product information (See reference A, page 2, sections 1 and 4, page 3, section 1, and column 4, section 2, and reference D, page 1, section 1, page 2, section 1, 2, 4, and 5, and page 3, section 1, wherein the GE Answer center provides a

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user with suggested product information that leads the user to provide the necessary information).

Both Storch et al. and *GE Answer Center* disclose scheduling service calls for customers based on product information as well as eliciting information from the customers to aid in the communication and identification of the problem of the customer. It is old and well known that a service representative (or the interface acting as a service representative) has specific information that must be known in order to help a customer and that the representative (or interface) will gain this needed information from the customer by asking questions and receiving answers to these questions. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to suggest product information to the user so that the user would provide the product information in order to better meet the needs of the customer by gaining all the information needed to diagnose the customer's situation.

13. As per claim 9, Storch et al. discloses a method further comprising providing to the user a suggested nature of a problem based on the product information (See column 56, lines 1-25 and 41-61, wherein based on the product information the user is provided with a suggested nature of the problem based on the historical knowledge of tool on similar product information).

14. As per claim 10, Storch et al. teaches a method further comprising obtaining one of the at least one available appointment selected by the user (See at least figure 12, column 54, lines 66-67, column 55, lines 1-8, 18-38, and 45-60, column 57, lines 42-54, and column 58, lines 5-35 and 46-58, wherein the at least one available appointment time is obtained for the user and is stored in association with their service call request).

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15. As per claim 11, Storch et al. discloses a method further comprising notifying the service provider of the one of the at least one available appointment selected by the user (See column 54, lines 1-10, 40-48, and 65-67, and column 57, lines 25-37, wherein the system of the service provider is notified of the due date of the service order and the service order is completed by the due date).

16. As per claim 12, Storch et al. teaches a method with a service provider associated with the company (See column 54, lines 1-15 and 66-67, column 55, lines 1-8, 18-23, 27-38, and 45-60, column 57, lines 42-54, and column 58, lines 5-35 and 46-58, wherein service providers are associated with the company). However, Storch et al. does not expressly disclose that the service provider is at least one of a factory service provider and an authorized service provider.

GE Answer Center teaches that the service provider is at least one of a factory service provider and an authorized service provider (See reference A, page 2, section 3, wherein the service provider is an authorized service provider).

Both Storch et al. and *GE Answer Center* disclose scheduling service calls with service providers for customers based on product information. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to use at least one of factory service provider and an authorized service provider in order to increase brand loyalty by providing customers with the most qualified persons for the servicing job, as stated in reference A, page 2, section 3.

17. As per claim 13, Storch et al. discloses a method further comprising setting the one of the at least one available appointment selected by the user as unavailable for other users (See at least figure 12, column 54, lines 66-67, column 55, lines 1-8, 18-38, and 45-60, column 57, lines 42-

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54, and column 58, lines 5-35 and 46-58, wherein the at least one selected available appointment is stored in the system as unavailable).

18. As per claim 14, Storch et al. discloses obtaining and validating product information (See column 54, lines 1-17, and column 56, lines 1-24, wherein product information is obtained and validated during the service appointment providing process). However, Storch et al. does not expressly disclose validating warranty coverage for the product based on the product information.

GE Answer Center discloses validating warranty coverage for the product based on the product information (See reference A, page 2, sections 1-3, and page 3, section 1, reference B, page 2, section 2, and reference D, page 2, section 5, wherein the warranty coverage for the product is validated based on the product information obtained from the customer).

Both Storch et al. and *GE Answer Center* disclose scheduling service calls for customers based on product information as well as confirming product information to ensure the right service is provided to a customer (ex.'s offering the right solution to a customer, confirming dispatch is needed or not needed, etc.). It is old and well known that products have warranty coverages associated with them that explain the terms of the services given with the ownerships. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to validate warranty coverage for a product in order to increase brand loyalty by better serving the in-warranty customers based on the terms of their warranty and more quickly and accurately referring out-of-warranty customers to the appropriate technicians, as stated in reference A, page 2, section 3.

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19. As per claim 15, Storch et al. teaches a method further comprising obtaining a nature of a problem of the product (See column 54, lines 1-8 and 66-67, column 55, lines 1-8 and 60-67, column 56, lines 1-21 and 44-55, wherein the nature of the problem is obtained from a customer through the service order process). However, Storch et al. does not expressly disclose providing do-it-yourself repair information based on the nature of the problem.

GE Answer Center teaches obtaining a nature of a problem of the product and providing do-it-yourself repair information based on the nature of the problem (See reference A, page 2, section 1, page 3, section 1, and page 4, sections 1, 2, and 3, wherein the nature of the problem information is obtained and do-it-yourself repair information is provided using the problem information).

Both Storch et al. and *GE Answer Center* disclose scheduling service calls for customers based on product information as well as trying to not dispatch service providers when a dispatch is unnecessary. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to provide do-it-yourself repair information based on the nature of the problem in order to reduce the number of service calls by helping a user address simpler problems, thereby saving service call appointments for users who truly need the technicians and saving money for the company by not unnecessarily dispatching technicians.

20. As per claim 16, Storch et al. discloses a method wherein the obtaining the product information at a first computing unit from input of the product information by the user at a second computing unit coupled to the first computing unit via a communications network (See column 54, lines 66-67, and column 55, lines 1-10, wherein the product information is obtained

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at a second location from inputting at a first location via a communications network (the information is transmitted online)).

21. As per claim 17, Storch et al. teaches a method wherein a communications network is used that is accessible by either the order taker or the customer as well as the technicians (See column 54, lines 1-8 and 66-67, column 55, lines 1-8, and column 57, lines 30-38, which discloses an on-line accessible communications system wherein the customer or the order taker can access information). However, Storch et al. does not expressly disclose that the communications network is a global computer network.

GE Answer Center discloses a global computer network (See reference C, page 1, sections 1 and 2, which disclose Web access to the system).

Both Storch et al. and *GE Answer Center* disclose scheduling service calls for customers based on product information as well as communicating using a computer communication network. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to use a global network as the communications network of Storch et al. in order to increase usability of the tool by allowing users and service providers at remote locations access to information of the system. Using global communications networks for increased access to information from remote locations is old and well known in the art.

22. As per claim 18, Storch et al. discloses a method wherein said service call is for repair of a home appliance (See column 55, lines 28-33, and column 56, lines 10-20, wherein the service call is a request for the repair of the home appliance of a phone).

23. As per claim 19, Storch et al. teaches a method of enabling scheduling of a service call for repair of a home appliance in a computing environment, the method comprising:

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obtaining product information regarding a product at a first computing unit from input of the product information by a user at a second computing unit coupled to the first computing unit via a communications network (See column 54, lines 1-15 and 66-67, column 55, lines 1-10, column 56, lines 10-25 and 41-51, wherein a customer enters product information from a user into the computing environment. The product information is obtained at a second location from inputting at a first location via a communications network (the information is transmitted online)); and

automatically providing from the first computing unit to the user that input the product information at the second computing unit at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information, wherein automatically providing includes providing without interaction between the user and any other human being (See column 53, lines 62-67, column 54, lines 1-15 and 66-67, column 55, lines 1-8, 18-23, 27-38, and 45-60, column 57, lines 42-54, and column 58, lines 5-35 and 46-58, wherein the user is automatically provided via the computing system at least one appointment at which he/she can schedule an appointment for a service house call based on the known product information. The customer automatically interacts with the computer system. See specifically column 53, lines 62-67, and column 54, lines 1-5);

reviewing a user's account (See at least column 54, lines 15-30); and

determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider (See at least column 55, lines 1-8, 18-23, 27-38, and 45-60, column 56, lines 1-25 and 60-67, and column 57, lines 15-40, wherein a determination is made as to whether the product needs to be serviced by a technician).

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However, while Storch et al. discloses reviewing the account of the user to make determinations about the scheduling of a technician, Storch et al. does not expressly disclose and *GE Answer Center* discloses:

determining whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product (See reference A, page 1, section 1, and page 2, section 3, wherein a determination is made whether the product is in warranty and serviced by the manufacturer); and

determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, wherein the service provider is different than the manufacturer (See reference A, page 1, section 1, page 2, section 3, page 4, sections 3 and 4, and page 5, section 1, wherein out-of-warranty calls are referred to authorized service technicians).

Both Storch et al. and *GE Answer Center* disclose scheduling service calls for customers based on product information as well as communicating using a computer communication network. It was old and well known at the time of the invention that products and installations have associated warranties that are considered when completing a service request. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to determine whether the product information indicates whether the product needs to be serviced by a manufacturer or a service provider when scheduling the technician of Storch et al. in order to more efficiently schedule a qualified technician that meets the needs of the service order input by the user.

24. As per claims 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27, claims 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27 are method claims with equivalent limitations to claims 2, 4, 5, 6, 15, 10, 11, and 13,

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respectively. Therefore, claims 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27 are rejected using the same art and rationale applied in the rejections of claims 2, 4, 5, 6, 15, 10, 11, and 13, respectively.

25. As per claims 28-45, claims 28-45 are system versions of the methods of claims 1-18, respectively. Therefore, claims 28-45 are rejected using the art relied upon in the rejections of claims 1-18, respectively.

26. As per claims 46-54, claims 46-54 are systems versions of the methods of claims 19-27, respectively. Therefore, claims 46-54 are rejected using the same art relied upon in the rejections of claims 19-27, respectively.

27. As per claims 55-63, claims 55-63 are systems versions of the methods of claims 19-27, respectively. Therefore, claims 55-63 are rejected using the same art relied upon in the rejections of claims 19-27, respectively.

28. As per claim 64, Storch et al. teaches an article of manufacture comprising:

at least one computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied therein for causing the scheduling of a service call for repair of a home appliance (See column 54, lines 1-15 and 66-67, column 55, lines 1-10, 18-23, 27-38, and 45-60, column 56, lines 10-20, column 57, lines 42-54, and column 58, lines 5-35 and 46-58, wherein a service call is scheduled for a repair of a home appliance of a phone), the computer readable program code means in said article of manufacture comprising:

computer readable program code means for causing a computer to obtain product information at a first computing unit from input of the product information by the user at a second computing unit coupled to the first computing unit via a communications network (See column 54, lines 1-15 and 66-67, column 55, lines 1-10, column 56, lines 10-25 and 41-51,

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wherein an order taker person or a customer enters product information from a user into the computing environment. The product information is obtained at a second location from inputting at a first location via a communications network (the information is transmitted online));

computer readable program code means for causing a computer to provide from the first computing unit to the user that input the product information at the second computing unit at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information (See column 53, lines 62-67, column 54, lines 1-15 and 66-67, column 55, lines 1-10, 18-23, 27-38, and 45-60, column 57, lines 42-54, and column 58, lines 5-35 and 46-58, wherein the user is automatically provided via the computing system's units at least one appointment at which he/she can schedule an appointment for a service house call based on the known product information) reviewing a user's account (See at least column 54, lines 15-30);

computer readable program code means for causing a computer to review a user's account (See at least column 54, lines 15-30); and

computer readable program code means for causing a computer to determine whether the product is serviced by a service provider (See at least column 55, lines 1-8, 18-23, 27-38, and 45-60, column 56, lines 1-25 and 60-67, and column 57, lines 15-40, wherein a determination is made as to whether the product needs to be serviced by a technician).

However, while Storch et al. discloses reviewing the account of the user to make determinations about the scheduling of a technician, Storch et al. does not expressly disclose and *GE Answer Center* discloses:

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determining whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product (See reference A, page 1, section 1, and page 2, section 3, wherein a determination is made whether the product is in warranty and serviced by the manufacturer); and

determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, wherein the service provider is different than the manufacturer (See reference A, page 1, section 1, page 2, section 3, page 4, sections 3 and 4, and page 5, section 1, wherein out-of-warranty calls are referred to authorized service technicians).

Both Storch et al. and *GE Answer Center* disclose scheduling service calls for customers based on product information as well as communicating using a computer communication network. It was old and well known at the time of the invention that products and installations have associated warranties that are considered when completing a service request. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to determine whether the product information indicates whether the product needs to be serviced by a manufacturer or a service provider when scheduling the technician of Storch et al. in order to more efficiently schedule a qualified technician that meets the needs of the service order input by the user.

29. As per claims 65-72, claims 65-72 are systems versions of the methods of claims 20-27, respectively. Therefore, claims 65-72 are rejected using the same art relied upon in the rejections of claims 20-27, respectively

30. As per claim 73, Storch et al. teaches determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider (See at least column 55, lines 1-8, 18-23, 27-38, and 45-60, column 56, lines 1-

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25 and 60-67, and column 57, lines 15-40, wherein a determination is made as to whether the product needs to be serviced by a technician).

However, Storch et al. does not expressly disclose and *GE Answer Center* discloses:

determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, wherein the service provider is different than the manufacturer comprises determining whether the product is serviced by an authorized service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, the authorized service provider having agreed with the manufacturer to provide a service similar to that provided by the manufacturer (See reference A, page 1, section 1, page 2, section 3, page 4, sections 3 and 4, and page 5, section 1, wherein out-of-warranty calls are referred to authorized service technicians).

Both Storch et al. and *GE Answer Center* disclose scheduling service calls for customers based on product information as well as communicating using a computer communication network. It was old and well known at the time of the invention that products and installations have associated warranties that are considered when completing a service request. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to determine whether the product information indicates whether the product needs to be serviced by a manufacturer or an authorized service provider when scheduling the technician of Storch et al. in order to more efficiently schedule a qualified technician that meets the needs of the service order input by the user.

31. As per claims 74-78, claims 74-78 recite equivalent limitations to claim 73 and are therefore rejected in each instance using the same art and rationale as applied in the rejection of claim 73.

Response to Arguments

32. Applicant's arguments with regards to the rejections based on Storch et al. (U.S. 5,920,846) in view of *GE Answer Center* (General Electric Company, reference A-D disclosed above) have been fully considered, but they are not persuasive. In the remarks, Applicant argues that (1) Storch et al. does not teach or suggest (1) the limitations of claims 1, 19, 28, 46, 55, and 64 and (2) that neither Storch et al. nor *GE Answer Center* teaches or suggests determining whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product, and determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, wherein the service provider is different than the manufacturer.

In response to argument (1), Applicant's arguments fail to comply with 37 CFR 1.111(b) because they amount to a general allegation that the claims define a patentable invention without specifically pointing out how the language of the claims patentably distinguishes them from the references. In each instance, Applicant has merely copied the claim limitations and stated that Storch et al. does not teach them. Examiner respectfully disagrees with the Applicant, and reasserts the rejections set forth above.

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In response to argument (2) of the Applicant, Examiner first points out that these limitations were added in the amendments of 01/13/04 and have been addressed in the new rejections above, as necessitated by amendment. Examiner asserts that at least Reference A of *GE Answer Center* does teach these new limitations in reference A, page 1, section 1, page 2, section 3, page 4, sections 3 and 4, and page 5, section 1, wherein in-warranty calls are dealt with by the manufacturer while out-of-warranty calls are referred to authorized service technicians. (See rejections above).

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Reichwein et al. (U.S. 6,311,162) teaches compiling work orders for a customer using inputted information.

Sandifer (U.S. 6,292,806) discloses a repair system interface.

Koether (U.S. 5,875,430) discloses a communication network for appliance repair.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Beth Van Doren whose telephone number is (703) 305-3882.

The examiner can normally be reached on M-F, 8:30-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tariq Hafiz can be reached on (703) 305-9643. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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lwd

bvd

April 21, 2004


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